

Do immigrant deaths at the border influence white and Latinx Americans' belief in the American dream?

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The American dream narrative posits that anyone who works hard can become successful in the US, whereas the systemic racism narrative argues that the US is a racist country where minorities are systemically

held back.

A survey-based [study](#) in *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* has found that these narratives predict individuals' support for the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump or Joe Biden, above and beyond more traditional political ideologies.

In a follow-up experiment in which participants were confronted with news clips of immigrant deaths at the border, white individuals decreased their belief in the American dream and increased their beliefs in systematic racism, while Latinx individuals increased their belief in the American dream and decreased their beliefs in systematic racism.

The researchers noted that the results may help to explain support for the Republican party among Latinx voters.

"For Latino immigrants, the narrative of the American dream offers a path toward assimilation to US culture as well as financial stability. The American dream narrative becomes even more of a source of power and hope when faced with the sacrifices of immigrants crossing borders," said corresponding author Ella Ben Hagai, Ph.D., of California State University.

"A possible reason why white participants did not increase their agreement with the American dream but endorsed a view of the US as a systemic racist country may be because of their psychological need to feel moral when they learn about the deaths of immigrants crossing the border."

More information: Immigrant's death at the border: Do they Influence White and Latinx Americans' Belief in the American Dream?, *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/asap.12382](https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12382)
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